[Idma]

/77 cont./

173 175 619 Around 1700, the Idma secured, on the side of the Tabgurt, the water from the Amerdul spring which irrigates the ground of Agersili, and, lower, /78/ the lands of Ad'erd'ur. Two documents concluded at the end of these debates confirm it. I have given the translation of them elsewhere. The a. Gasa eliminated, the conquerors were no longer uneasy about their immediate neighbors, a. Mh'nd and Imt'ddan, with whom their alliance has endured up to our day, without great vicissitudes it seems. A rapacious policy, fertile in actions of guile or of achievement, is the lot of their chiefs. The monopoly of land and brutalities seem to be the method necessary for them. Not without ripostes from the group sometimes. Tradition knows several violent deaths of the amghar-s who henceforth reign over all the present ensemble. Thus Wakrim u Bella, in 1881, was killed by the thief Bahhas, whom, at the head of the jemâa, he rounded up in his house. Âbdallah Ijjiwi of the a. Sirra was assassinated during his sleep at Talmud'ât.

There is nothing surprising in the precision of such anecdotes. Among the Idma, the power of group life depends on fidelity to the past. An oral chronicle recollects, along with the memory of the struggles against the a. Gasa, that of the great chiefs whose succession, from the eighteenth century to our day, is retraced in all its details. Therefore here is a list of them. It will be given here less for its own interest than for the cachet of historicity that it impresses on the life of these small societies.

/The following paragraph is in small type in the original source./ The farthest that one goes back, it is a great amghar of the family of the Iseqqalen whose silhouette is discovered. Lh'âjj Bujmâ, profiting from the liquidation of the a. Gasa, procured for himself by law, violence, or ruse numerous landed estates in the valley. He was carried away by the plague epidemic of 1790, and it seems that his heirs had to disgorge (1). [731] [428]

1. Text translated in our "Documents anciens sur la coutume immobilière des

[Idma]

619
173
175
(428)
(431)

/78 cont./

/footnote 1 continued/ Seksawa /Old documents on the landed-property customs of the Seksawa/," R. afr., 1948, p. 391. On these epidemics at the end of the eighteenth century, an-Nâçirî, "Istiqcâ'," Arch. Mar. tr., X, p. 14; Ezziani, Le Maroc de 1631 à 1812 /Morocco from 1631 to 1812/, Houdas tr., 1886, p. 181; the number of successions in escheat is so great that the Makhzen /makhzan/ sends special agents into the Sous to collect them. In the mountains, however, it is always the commune that applies itself to these recoveries. And it does it within impeccable juridical forms.

(648)

173
619

His uncle succeeds him: this is Moh'ammed u Yah'ya. Then follow:

Wakrim u Bella n-a. Lgerchman of Usikis.

Brahim u Yâza n-a. Ilarz of Usikis.

Moh'ammed u Lîla n-a. H'addo.

Brahim u Mohammed u Zed'd'ib.

Wakrim u Bella u Lh'âjj of the Iseqqalen.

His son Moh'ammed u Bella Âmono.

Wakrim u Bella.

His nephew Moh'ammed u Brahim Lh'âjj n-a. Zed'd'ib.

H'fid' u Mohammed n-a. u Lîila.

Sâid u Akâyus n-a. u Muzun (Usikis).

Âbdallah Ijjiwi n-a. u Sirra of Tannsmekht.

/79/ Lah'sen u Sâid n-a. u Muzun (a. u H'aqqi of Tasselli).

Mohammed Akraray (Talmud'ât).

Lh'ajj H'fid' u Moh'ammed Wânono, father of the present amghar. He is violent conqueror, doubling as a flexible politician. He commanded for two years, then left on a pilgrimage.

H'fid' u Moh'ammed u Lîila n-a. H'addo: he died of leprosy.

Moh'ammed u Lh'âjj: he became blind.

Lh'ajj H'fid' Wânono: he definitively recaptured the power that his family has kept up to now.

[Ait Gasa]

/85 cont./

175 1259 Heg.: 1833 mentions some a. Gasa still living, who, driven
174 from Rekto, are now on the other side at Dddu-wzru.
619 In the meantime, in the main valley, the Idma, and among them the family of the Iseqqalen (curiously, homonym of an ait Gasa family of Tannsmekht), have slowly spread. The first two acquirers of Iggiz, who are also intercessors, find themselves in part dispossessed. New times, new masters. It is their turn to set down istirᶜâ'. Thus, in 1253 Heg.: 1837, Naçr u Ali Ikru solemnly protests against the encroachments of the ait Umghar of Tannsmekht and of Messâud u Jâa of Tamt'ddit. In fact the two taqbilt-s are in the full phase of personal power.

[634] In 1252 Heg.: 1827, 12 old men from Usikis protest against
[578] a great amghar, an obstinate monopolist, and from whom only the epidemic of 1212 Heg.: 1798 could deliver them.
[731] "The witnesses of those present know the late Lh'âjj Bujmâ
175 Wakrim as-Saqâfî of Usikis by sight, name, and person. In testi-
539 mony thereof, they state that in his lifetime he exercised his
619 domination over the whole Idma tribe -- he and his sons, the Sheik Brâhim b. al-H'âjj and Sidi Belâîd, who thrust himself into the juridical consultations and was the Cadi for the entire tribe. Among the Idma there was no one who could set himself against him in the deliberations, nor any prevarications other than his.

"In his time, he and his sons bought land in all the cantons of the Idma tribe, took possession of their purchases, and were not belated anywhere in leaving rights in abeyance, since they kept power within living memory and thus maintained themselves until
[731] their death. This took place in 1214 (1800), the year of the epidemic. Their properties remain everywhere as they were. To our knowledge, no one has encroached upon them. But all that has remained as it is in the possession of their descendant Bella b. Moh'ammed, living today."

175 Thus the old egalitarian rule, presiding over the division of
174 plunder, with the allotment of conquered lands, reacts each time
619 that it /86/ can against the individuation of the law and the mobilization of the soil. A persistent legitimacy, which spans brutal evictions and contractual dispossessions, refers, after

/10 cont./

132 usually so easy in the plains, are cut off by the smallest gullies.
[133] In other winters, on the contrary, the cisterns remain empty and the atmosphere retains a pitiless limpidity from October to
132 March. The importance of annual variations in the total rain-
241 fall is such, and the distribution of rain so capricious, that outside of valleys fertilized by springs or the water from mountain torrents one cannot expect to obtain good harvests more than one time out of five. Every five years, every ten years at the
[731] most, several bad harvests follow one another and give rise to famine. When finally it happens that the cisterns have not been filled and the springs are drying up, men and flocks must abandon their territory for several months. So one sees each family try to acquire, in the vicinity of the séguias /conduits for supplying and distributing water/ descending from the mountains, a few tiny fields, cultivated with care, abundantly manured, whose three small annual harvests, always certain, will at least permit escaping the famine.

132 The Sous, not very favorable for the development of a sed-
233 entary life because of the irregularity and insufficiency of rain, nevertheless does not offer the nomads the vast open spaces necessary for their flocks. A forest thinly sown with argan trees covers part of the plains and hills near the Atlantic, and the stretches free for the course of the tribes are too small for pastoralists. The wandering peoples coming from the desert, who have invaded the valleys several times in the course of history, have not been able to stay there and preserve the nomadic life. Rebuffed by the sedentary people settled in the vicinity of the springs and séguias and whose cultivated lands extend all around or diminish, according to whether the year seems propitious or unfavorable to them, they have scattered /11/ or have adapted to the precarious life of the agriculturalists of the Sous.

132 V. The climate and the regime of the streams in the moun-
133 tains. -- The obstacle furnished by the mountains to the winds from the Atlantic, loaded with the greatly desired rain, changes noticeably the regularity of the climate. The two great parallel

311 241 166 [132] [731] [727] [101] [144] /14 cont./ Accordingly, when bad harvests follow one another too closely, the less favored regions first cast the people back toward the springs and séguias; then, if the rains still delay, as happens several times a century, famine chases families and flocks toward the plains of the Gharb /Rharb/. Tribal migrations in the wake of wars and epidemics further accelerate this perpetual stir. The result of these internal movements is to facilitate the fusion of races, unify culture, and give to the elements that form the "Chleuh" /Shluh/ group common characteristics that distinguish it easily from the other Berbère /Berber/ populations.

121 101 VII. The roads of the Atlas and of the Anti-Atlas. -- Whatever may be the richness of the central valley of the Sous wadi, which the Zagmouzen, the Haut-Dra, and the Dadès produce between the two chains, it is not in this part of the Moroccan South that one can observe the most original manifestations of the social life of the Berbères /Berbers/. The latter are not at ease in the qsour /fortified places/ and the big villages in the [177] midst of the séguias and gardens. There they encounter the "haraten" /Haratin/ -- descendants of black slaves -- the /15/ Arabs who have entered the service of the Makhzen /makhzan/, the shorfa /shurfa/, and the marabouts, attracted by the fertility [144] of the land. The population of the oases resulting from this mixture of races soon loses all its warlike qualities and most often falls under the domination of foreign leaders or of the more bellicose tribes in the vicinity. The true territory of the autochthons remains the mountains, and it is by studying the groups that occupy them and remain the most active and the most numerous that we shall succeed at the same time in understanding what influences are exerted on the lives of the inhabitants of the plains.

133 491 The Haut-Atlas /High Atlas/ and the Anti-Atlas do not by any means constitute an impassable barrier. They are crossed by numerous passes, which take the line of the valleys, by which constant relations are established between the two versants, so that the displacement of people, the migration of families and tribes are scarcely stopped by the obstacle of the mountains.

/46 cont./

43 Nevertheless, formerly, in the isolation of this region, a
182 balanced regime had been established here; at the cost of some
[166] privations, a population that remained retired within itself suc-
[731] ceeded in providing for itself, especially in the mountains; it did not have to call on the outside to increase its resources -- in the form of temporary emigration of the able-bodied men -- except at times of famine. Moreover, the profits which the Chleuhs /Shluh/ know how to make from the trade that they carry on in the towns even used to give certain tribes -- /47/ the Aït ʿAïsi and the Aït Mzal, for example -- actual prosperity.

433 But this fragile economy was to be upset by the opening of
439 Morocco to European markets in the nineteenth century. So poor
182 a country was indeed tempted to improve its difficult conditions
179 of existence by importing foodstuffs, clothing, and manufactured
[631] objects; but at the same time its purchases were contributing toward exhausting it. Moreover, since the establishment of the power of the great chiefs and kaids over the independent communities had the consequence of imposing heavy burdens on the tribes, the economic ruin of the Sous was to be brought about in two generations of people.

433 In truth, the various parts of the country found themselves
184 unequally affected by this transformation, according to their
182 initial state of poverty, the way of life of their inhabitants, and
179 their degree of penetration by the modern economy.

511 In the mountainous regions, at least where the political evo-
556 lution has not noticeably altered the primitive conditions of the
[184] people, there are neither true poor nor true rich. Each Berbère
[422] /Berber/ possesses a small flock of sheep and goats, and in the
[423] bottom of the valley some cultivated terraces, big walnut trees irrigated by the séguias, and almond trees on the flank of the mountain. Barley, rye, maize, turnips, long garlands of which dry hung along the houses, suffice for daily subsistence. Goats or sheep are sacrificed only on festival days or when a guest
511 comes by. Clothing does not require any great expense. That of
556 the women is made of a very long piece of brown wool with
291 which the body is adroitly draped and which is held above the

2: Montagne--489 E-5 (c.1921-1928) 1930 MW11 Shluh MW11

/376 cont./

648
*631
organize a single command (3).

3. Cf. "La Tribu de Massat /The Massat Tribe/," Hespéris, 1924, p. 392. With respect to the marabouts themselves, the sultan knows how to give proof of great cleverness and to utilize all their moral influence to strengthen his operations in the tribes. Moulay el Hasan's relations with the sherif of the Tazerwalt in the course of the second Sous expedition can be given as one of the best examples of the flexibility of a political operation entirely crowned with success. Cf. above, Book I, Ch. IV, and Géranton, Bulletin de l'Afrique française, p. 192.

Often, in the regions controlled best by the Sultan, the kaids' authority is limited by that of the "oumana," for although the tribal chiefs merit the name of "honest servants" in sherifian literature, the sultans have never hesitated to set down very freely the thefts and exactions that most of them committed (4).

• [131]

4. On the occasion of a famine, loans of money had been granted to the populations by Sultan Sidi Mohammed ben ʿAbdallah. Writing afterward to his people that he was giving up recovering his advances, this sovereign said, "I have not given you this money with the intention of reclaiming it from you, I have told you that it was a loan solely in order that it would not be secured by your sheiks and your notables for themselves, which they would have done if they had known that it was a gift on my part." "Istiqsa," Archives Marocaines, Vol. IX, p. 333.